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JACK B. YEATS

PICTORIAL & DRAMATIC ART

BY

ERNEST MARRIOTT



CONTAINING

CHART OF PIRATE ISLAND

BY JACK B. YEATS

AND A PORTRAIT.

LONDON:

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NOTE

This monograph on Jack B. Yeats was read at a meeting of The Manchester Literary Club, and printed in "The Manchester Quarterly" for July, 1911. It is now published with some alterations and additions to the text, and illustrated as set forth on the title page.

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First Published, 1911



JACK B. YEATS WHEN A CHILD.

By John Butler Yeats.

JACK B. YEATS

BEING A TRUE IMPARTIAL VIEW OF HIS
PICTORIAL & DRAMATIC ART

Wherein is Discovered the Author's sense of the
Unusual Excellence of the Astonishing Handiwork
Of this Singular Artist;

How he became possessed of a Quick and
Eager understanding of the same;

And his Sudden Purpose to publish his Knowledge
Thereof Abroad, as likewise to exhibit his
Diligent Study of it and his surpassing

WONDER
thereat.

Wherein also is

ANIMADVERTED, EXCOGITATED & PERPENDED

The Truth and Quality of this Unparalleled Artist's

PICTORIAL Observations; the Rare VALOUR

and SOLEMN INTENT of his PLAYS for

the TOY STAGE and his Divers

Inventions for the Delight of

all those who keep YOUTH

ever in their hearts

By

ERNEST MARRIOTT

*THE DISCOURSE ADORNED with a Portrait of
the ARTIST when a CHILD, by his FATHER,*

AND A

SURPRISING

CHART OF PIRATE ISLAND

Drawn

By the cunning and subtle Master hand of

JACK B. YEATS

Ex-Pirate and Re-Discoverer of the Land of Romance

LONDON:

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JACK B. YEATS

THE effects of environment upon the development of genius are noticeable in most instances where a family has put forth a plurality of members showing considerably more than average talent and capability. Ireland has given us many proofs of this, but none more forcefully than in the case of the two remarkable brothers Jack B. and W. B. Yeats—the former a distinguished black and white draughtsman, the latter perhaps the greatest poet alive to-day. Sligo, where they were born over forty years ago, has all the qualifications necessary for exerting a romantic influence to direct and sway the senses and the budding faculties of talented children. Its coastline is indented with bays. The surface of the landscape rises gradually from the coast to the Ox Mountains, and the whole county is full of picturesque lakes, ancient caverns, cromlechs and tumuli.

Although natural surroundings must have had effect upon the boys' natures, there was something more important. The great moulding influence was that of their father John Butler Yeats. This intellectual guide, himself a painter and a very subtle and profound talker, shaped and directed the growing intelligence of his sons. All through their boyhood he talked to them a philosophy of art not unlike that of Nietzsche, and,

as it is the impressions that come to one before the age of twenty that really dominate one's life, the results of this teaching can easily be traced in their work. His philosophy made perhaps the deepest impress on the poet, and even to-day W. B. Yeats finds himself amplifying and obeying it. Sligo, where the boys spent their childhood, cast a spell on them which they would not willingly shake off. To the artist it yielded the men and women he represents in his pictures; to the poet it gave an enthralling interest in folk-tales and fairy belief. Their native land, its history and legends, its condition and its people, have continually occupied the thoughts of the two brothers, and no year of their existence has passed when they have not spent some months in the country of their birth. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

♣ It has been said that in the work of every artist of genius there is a peculiar quality of beauty with which he is associated and for which his name stands. Speaking generally, this is true. In most instances it may only become evident after familiarity with many other productions by the same hand. In the case of Jack B. Yeats one feels that there must always have been associated with his personality a compelling and imaginative beauty, if not of line then of idea, sufficiently vivid and original to be recognized by itself. We are told by "A.E." that the earliest drawing of Jack Yeats of which there is any authentic evidence is an eye, and it is entitled "The Eye of a Person." The same writer has recorded that the young boy before he could use a pencil asked his mother to draw a

horse for him. She did so, but it was so bad that the boy wept. Soon he began to make drawings for himself. He did an illustrated History of England at the age of ten, and shortly afterwards startled the family with a drawing of a ghost "frightened because it saw another ghost"—truly a precocious development of his faculties! During his hours of freedom he wandered over Sligo, hanging about the quays and mixing with their tarry frequenters, or roaming the country roads and attending sports, races and fairgrounds—anywhere that the human interest looked promising.

His early drawings were mostly of races and hunting. The races in particular must have afforded abundant material for sketches. The Irish peasantry of his boyhood who could swallow and survive the chemical stuff sold as whisky at country race-meetings were a wonderfully hardy race, and consequently notable as types of physical endurance. In a letter describing these early days Mr. Yeats tells me that the sort of race-meeting he frequented was called the "Four pound nineteen." The values of the prizes were under five pounds, and therefore the meeting came under no rules at all. Hence the nickname. There he used to see the old-fashioned whisky tents made of bent saplings and covered with sacking. The tents were long and very low, like those of the gypsies, and the drink sold therein was called "twenty-four hours whisky," as it was made on the eve of the races. Any left over afterwards had to be thrown away as it would not keep. "It turned blue," adds Mr. Yeats, and trees grew in it." Impressions such as

he received at gatherings of this character were valuable to him.

This delightful roaming life continued until he was sixteen years old, when he was sent to London. He studied at several art schools—South Kensington, Chiswick, the West London, and at Westminster under Professor Fred Brown. The teaching he received was sufficient to give him a solid grounding in the rules of drawing, but fortunately the language of academic art was not powerful enough to destroy or tone down too much the rare native accent of his work. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

♣ Technique merely as technique does not exist for him, yet his drawings are full of the quality that is associated with skilled technical accomplishment, and his work shows a delight in the facility of the medium he has chosen to express his ideas. He is not a man beating against bars in an endeavour to escape out of the present into some different kind of world. He is satisfied with the spectacle of life as he finds it in the west of Ireland. His Irish types (such as, for instance, those reproduced in Synge's "Aran Islands," and at odd times in the *Manchester Guardian*) are not idealised. They are drawn with freedom and certainty. You are convinced that the hand has correctly interpreted the thought and you are kept continually in sympathetic contact with the reality of his vision. He can swing from a piece done with Rabelaisian gusto to a study in the macabre, or from the jaunty and debonnaire to the sombre and monstrous. No moralist is Jack B. Yeats. Nothing is to be despised. Everything in his net is counted as fish. The drunken tinker, the battered

prize-fighter, the fat lady at the fair, the High-toby-crack of old, and the rollicking squire on the piebald mare are some of his best catches. He makes them all yield to him something which has enough in it of the picturesque to fire his imagination like a spark on a line of gunpowder. His sympathy with brute creation makes him refrain from representations of ill-treated or miserable animals, but if he finds it necessary for his purpose to draw a scraggy horse he comforts himself by giving it a wicked eye.

From the beginning of his career as a press artist his humorous drawings have never degenerated into the merely comic. When he was seventeen years of age he drew for some of the halfpenny comic papers, and attended running matches nearly every Saturday making drawings for a sporting paper called "Paddock Life." Later on he worked for "Chums," "Fun," and other papers. These drawings were faggots to boil the pot. Seldom was he free to illustrate the things he himself thought funny. I know one person, however, who thought this early work the fountain head and last expression of humour. No regret could be keener than mine that I have not preserved those halfpenny journals which in early youth I purchased solely for the delight of beholding in all their reckless glory the fanciful figures of Jack Yeats. I did not at the time understand why his work was more attractive than that of the other contributors. It was the difference between mediocrity and a great talent allied to a Celtic temperament that gave his work the flavour and savour which were so alluring. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

✱ Mr. Yeats possesses a remarkable gift of giving a distinct character to all his drawings, and it is an accomplishment which many black and white artists must envy. There is a masterful firmness in his pen-work, a pliant ease of drawing apparently careless in manner, but really the essence of a style which is the result of absolute knowledge and a splendid harmony of hand and brain. Although his work demands no effort of appreciation the student can always find something in it to pore over and study. Who else can delineate with such economy of means the great spaces, the rich grazing lands and the "windy corners of high distant hills" of his native county? Who can give you so well a sense of the gay and exhilarating significance of a country fair? Except Jack Yeats no one since Cruikshank has made black and white pictures of mobs in a way so expressive of their blend of animation, humour, stolidity and hilarity.

An examination of these drawings will show that there are no hesitations, no meaningless details, nothing to obscure the structure. No sooner are the ideas conceived than they are put down glibly in lines and masses of black. His pen-line is vivid. It seems as if he lets his hand straggle carelessly over the paper and with a few deft touches and one or two dabs with a loaded brush, builds up our belief in the external reality of his conceptions and puts them before us in a manner authentic and final.

He draws both from models and without models, and has continually been engaged in filling sketch books with rough studies of detail. Up to the present time he has

accumulated over two hundred of these books, and has designed many quaint book-plates and drawn innumerable frontispieces.

Contrary to what might have been expected from a study of his work he seldom makes pictures of anything he has not actually seen happen. This especially applies to his paintings in oil and water-colour, which, by the way, are not so well known to the general public as they deserve to be. He makes an exception to this rule in the case of his black and white work when he comes to draw designs for the embellishment of toy theatre plays and other books which he has invented for the delight of all children under ninety. The subjects of his pictures are mostly scenes of life in the West of Ireland. Little of his landscape work is exhibited, as it is usually intended for use as backgrounds for his figures. The original drawings are generally about half as big again as the reproductions except in very crowded designs when he makes them at least twice the size of the intended reduction. His sister, Miss E. C. Yeats, publishes at the Cuala Press "A Broadside," which is a double sheet issued monthly at the modest price of one shilling. The contents are worth many times the price asked. Poems and ballads grave and gay, whimsical and grim, are contributed by well-known writers of the Irish movement; but it is valuable mainly on account of Jack Yeats' illustrations which are hand-coloured after printing.

"A Broadsheet," published by Eikin Mathews, preceded the "Broadside," and ran for twenty-four numbers with contributions by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory,

Professor York Powell, "A. E.," John Masefield, Wilfrid Gibson, and drawings by Miss Pamela Colman Smith and Jack Yeats. ♣

♣ Original as Mr. Yeats' drawings are, his writings are just as remarkable, and no consideration of his genius would be adequate that did not devote as much attention to the one phase as the other.

He has published five books dealing entirely with essentials. Together they do not weigh more than a few ounces. Placed flat on top of one another they are not an inch high. Yet within that small compass there is much of the quaint and beautiful; and I would barter a few yards of the sacred books of Eastern philosophy rather than lose from my shelves these precious five. Before going any further I must avert a commination from the over-sophisticated by issuing a solemn warning. If any of you who read these lines have become eminently practical; if you have lost or mislaid your sense of wonder; or if you are in any way indifferent to the simple but fascinating joys of youth these publications of Mr. Yeats will have no charm for you. You will be amazed at what we who marvel and admire can read into them. Not one of these books takes more than a quarter of an hour to read, but—the inspiring glory of those fifteen minutes! A glory, too, which can be recaptured again and again.

Should a friend beg a literary loan I say to him, "Borrow any books you like, but do not ask me to lend you my Yeats."

A few shillings will purchase the miraculous batch, and it is better that he should buy the books at a little more than the price of a

lawyer's letter than that I should be put to that expense to recover possession.

It may be thought that I am making a fuss over a small matter! Listen to the titles and then say if your interest is not aroused:—

1. The Bosun and the Bob-tailed Comet.
2. A Little Fleet.
3. The Treasure of the Garden.
4. The Scourge of the Gulph.
5. James Flaunty, or the Terror of the Western Seas.

(All published by Mr. Elkin Mathews).

The first-mentioned is a saucy narrative telling how Billy the Bosun, after being paid off by his ship, bought a stout pony and galloped along quite happily until he met a comet. Discarding his horse, he bridled the comet and rode it over the countryside. "Of course," says the story, "people were rather astonished. Then the tail of that silly little comet used to catch in the tops of the trees, until the Bosun made it shorter by tying it in a knot." What happens after this should be read in the book itself which is printed in heavy black type and has an illustration on each page. The drawings are vigorous and have the severity of old-fashioned woodcuts, and the whole book is gotten up in the manner of the ancient Chap-books "which" as Mr. Charles Whibley says, "none can contemplate without an enchanted sentiment."

"A Little Fleet" is a description of the various toy-boats made by young Jack Yeats and his chums. The narrow winding stream and small pond at their disposal are magnified into a wide and treacherous river, full of whirlpools and snags, and running under

beetling cliffs. "The Monte was the first of our vessels and was made out of a flat piece of wood about five inches long. She had two masts and was rigged up as a fore and aft schooner. . . . She started from No Name Straits with wind and tide . . . and bore away for mid-stream to avoid the *nifty* snags that lie at the foot of the bluff called Pirate's Leap, called that because a poet who had been a pirate was thinking about a poem when he ought to have been shoving the vessel off the rock, and so he fell in." Another vessel they built was the Moby Dick, a steamboat with a cocoa-tin as paddle-box:—

She sailed down Gara valley,
She startled all the cows;
With touchwood in her galley
And green paint round her bows.

This boat did not live long, and eventually

She came to flying anchor
At the twilight time of day;
But the strain on the cable sank her—
And the crew, oh, where were they?

Other vessels constructed were The Theodore, a fireship; The Pasear, a top-sail schooner; and The New Corinthian, who had little in the way of adventures until "the Tadpoles tried to board her!" The quaintest verses in the book are those by the pirate poet who fell off the bluff:—

And now by Gara rushes
When stars are blinking white;
And sleep has stilled the thrushes,
And sunset brings the night;
There where the stones are gleamin'
A passer-by can hark
To the old, drowned "Monte" seamen
A-singing through the dark.



There where the gnats are pesky
They sing like anything;
They sing like Jean de Reszke,
This is the song they sing:

Our bones are green and weeded,
Our bones are old and wet;
But the noble deeds that we did
We never can forget.

I am not at liberty to announce who wrote these heroic verses but I may say that the "pirate" responsible is now a famous poet, novelist, dramatist, and sea-historian. The wise will need no further hints. ♣ ♣

♣ The remaining three booklets are plays written for a toy stage measuring twelve inches across. For those who wish to experience the rewards and successes and the pains and penalties of theatrical management there are special issues of the plays with instructions how to colour the scenes and characters. Also there are fascinating particulars such as those given in the introduction to "The Treasure of the Garden"—how before pasting the last scene on a card you must cut a piece out of the board to correspond to where the moonlight falls on the water. This is so that at the moment when MacGowan the man-hunter rises out of the pit with the crock of gold in his arms a candle may be held behind the scene to shine through the paper and illuminate the track of the moon.

Those who produce these dramas will discover many compensations. No licence is required, no fees have to be paid, and a submission to the censor is unnecessary. As to the plays themselves, if you have not yet made their acquaintance, enchantment awaits

you. Turn to the beginning of "James Flaunty," and immediately you will find yourself on the verge of great happenings. The scene opens on the West African coast. A frigate is lying at anchor in a creek. The background is a line of palms. Beach-combers attack the fibreless William Pine, who swears he has no money of which to be robbed. Enter James Flaunty, the terror of the western seas, dressed in baggy trousers, top boots and gaudy sash. With drawn sword he advances and the crowd retires slowly before him.

"Will ye back, or will ye not?" he roars. "Back, I say, creek rats! or let each man wait and see me spit his fellow on this sweet sword."

Later on Lieutenant Florry of H.M.S. The Cormorant, endeavours to secure Flaunty's services to lead the pig-tailed sailors to where the pirates' ships lie hidden.

Flaunty: Then you are in certain earnest
This is to be a crushing blow?

Lieutenant: Aye, a crusher; every gun double-shotted, every man full of fight. We have a crew, Mr. Flaunty—ah, such a crew! The cream of fighting men, picked from four frigates on these coasts. Not boys, you understand me, but toughened men. Men who have hung by Scraw Wallaw—the shaking Scraw that hangs o'er the mouth of Hell—and come back again.

Scene 2 is in the parlour of the Inn. Nance, the inn-keeper's daughter, wishes to warn Flaunty of the danger of the enterprise:—

"O cruel Jim, every one of them quicktraders has a *sashful of swords*. How many have tried to wipe them off the coasts? Scores! They came the quick, they went back the dead."

Flaunty, however, is built of the stuff of heroes. "What of that, Nance, 'tis but the chance of war. If I come back alive, fifty guineas; If I die, a round shot and a canvas bag." So the whole play goes on with scuttling, pillaging, treachery and murder to a brave finish. The illustrations are wonderful: with a few lines everything essential is expressed in a lurid but highly artistic manner. Particularly striking is the picture of the dripping pirate, Eldorado Gillen, emerging from the trap door with the glare of a fiend in his eyes.

One of Mr. Yeats' most attractive designs is reproduced in the "The Scourge of the Gulph." It is almost lyrical. Captain Carrick-nagat, a black bearded buccaneer, reclines in an elegant attitude by the cabin table at the right of the stage. Through the open cabin window can be caught a distant glimpse of the Isle of Plumes. Three cutlasses hang on the wall, and the deck-beams over-head and the flooring boards are done with long sweeping lines which carry the interest to the principal figure and give a feeling of rhythm to the scene. The plot is as follows: The captain hears that his wife is captured and eaten by cannibals. Bosun Broad has escaped with the loss of an arm and brings a letter from the unfortunate lady containing a last request that the captain should find her remains, take her skull and bear it away in a black box with silver hinges to their Island of Plumes, there to bury it on the round hill. Off the Captain goes in search of the skull. Scene 3 is the Grove of Heads on Savage Island. Enter Captain and Bosun.

Captain: None of my brave crew are left; and how bravely they went through the savages,

they went through the first pack like the shuttle through the loom. My ship is sunk: I piled her on the coral, and now she lies with 50,000 pieces of eight in her.

Only the Captain and Bosun are left and still they pursue the quest of the skull. Eventually they find it and bear it away. On the Isle of Plumes, after the Bosun has died of the black thirst, the disconsolate Captain apostrophises the universe in terms of utter melancholy, never forgetting, however, to introduce a literary flavour into his monody. While digging a grave with his sword he speaks of the skull as "this sad piece of ivory." His end is swift and sudden and the play ends on a note of interrogation. Joe Miles, who was marooned in the first act, appears while the Captain is occupied in his task.

Miles (seeing the Captain, and thinking there is treasure in the box): At last! there he stands. How long he has been a-coming; but now he's in my power. I'll settle him with the old piece, break open the box, and then the people who thought him a buccaneer will laugh to see what I'll bring them to. Oh, what a fine revenge. I have waited for him, living on what I could pick up in the woods, and many a gaudy parrot fell to my gun—here goes for a gaudier! (Fires, Captain falls. Miles goes over and presently is seen on his knees at wings with box open, holding up skull). An empty skull, a black box, a dead skipper! Have I done anything or nothing?

Curtain.

Mr. Yeats has also written the following: "Esmeralda Grande," "James Dance or the fortunate ship-boy," "The Mysterious Travellers or the Gamesome Princes and the Pursuing Policeman" (a pantomime). So far they are unpublished, but he has pro-

duced them on his own private stage—a fairly large one for cardboard theatricals, about four feet across and the characters eight inches high. ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣ ♣

♣ There must be a reason why these little plays have gained such a firm hold on certain people. Here and there you will find a most unlikely person welling up with enthusiasm about one or other of the booklets. I have been told, for instance, that the late Professor York Powell could recite from memory whole pages of “James Flaunty, the terror of the Western Seas.”

It seems to me that these diminutive dramas shew something of the fanciful simplicity and directness of phrase which we find in the work of the better-known dramatists of the Irish movement. Indeed there seems no adequate reason why one of them should not be performed on the public stage as a curtain raiser to a burlesque play. I make a present of the suggestion to the Horniman company. There is, I submit, no doubt that the plays have literary quality. To supplement the specimens already given, here are a few from “The Treasure of the Garden.” Bosun Hardbite addressing McGowan who is seated on a mooring post on the quay says, “Sit there on yer old iron mushyroom till the seaweed grows you.” An Emigrant replies, “The poor captain is feeling sad in his heart. The poor man, like the rest of us, doesn’t like leaving the dear silk of the kine.” At the beginning of the drama the captain ruminates, “What a roaring life it is too, chasing the rich ships—the big fat pigeons with crops full of gold. But it’s the other thing that sickens—fighting two great ugly frigates in a little ditch of a creek. . . . they fall across you and lie on

you like a dead horse." The impressive scene where he makes this speech is a battered deck with bullet-riddled pirates hanging from the shrouds in the last horror of bodily death. ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

❀ In arranging these plays for acting, Mr. Yeats has shown himself to have something in common with Mr. Gordon Craig who has "rid the stage of antiquarian accuracies and replaced dead pedantry with poetry." Craig realised that theatrical representation needed simplifying. Many obscuring twigs needed lopping off the parent tree to show the majesty of large but simple effects; also how form and colour controlled by the designer intensified and heightened the dramatic beauty of the play. The costumes, gesture and grouping were details which he brought into harmony with the simplified basic structure of the theatrical scene.

With the settings of Mr. Yeats' plays we find broad masses and an insistence on the lines being well-defined so that no swamping with detail should distribute the interest and smother the imagination. His enthusiasm for the theatre is obvious, he has at his finger tips the mysteries of its craft and his plays should give the audience the right kind of dramatic throb. For subjects he uses the figures of ancient popular melodrama, but there is a difference when they have passed through his alembic. They have been broken to pieces, trimmed here and there, glued up again, carved afresh into something new and strange and made to fall into harmony with their backgrounds with a rhythm and balance of pose which make for absolute dramatic congruity. They are still melodramatic but the romantic reality sub-

limates the melodrama and it becomes vital and stirring to the imagination. To some extent the success of these small tragi-comedies depends on the sympathetic understanding and high seriousness brought to bear on them by the reader. To all such readers these valiant figures and imaginary scoundrel-heroes will appeal. They are nobler than any who ever pattered the flash in real life a century ago. Veritable legs of the devil, some of them, to whom existence is a jest and exuberance normality, they still are, after all, the creatures of a departed age. No pale phantoms nor shadowy visitants are they, however. Their grip on us is real and our hearts beat in sympathy with them. ♣

♣ Jack B. Yeats is a distinguished craftsman in two arts. His paintings and drawings are a true expression of the Celtic mind. In the main his black and white works are decorative in composition. They show a nice disposition of masses and great flexibility and sprightliness of line. A general harmony of matter and manner fusing all the qualities lifts, as it were, the whole work complete and places it full square to the observer in the realm of imaginative truth. Animated, in some drawings, by an almost passionate gaiety he can, if necessary, represent the sepulchral and tragic. Full of humour when depicting the jovial characters who rollick in the pages of the "Broad sides," he can, when he likes, change to the acid and sardonic. His plays are for an uncommercial theatre whose gate-money is not the measure of its success, whose traffic is with the things of the mind, whose commerce comes and goes in golden little galleons of old romance.

It is a great delight to him to draw

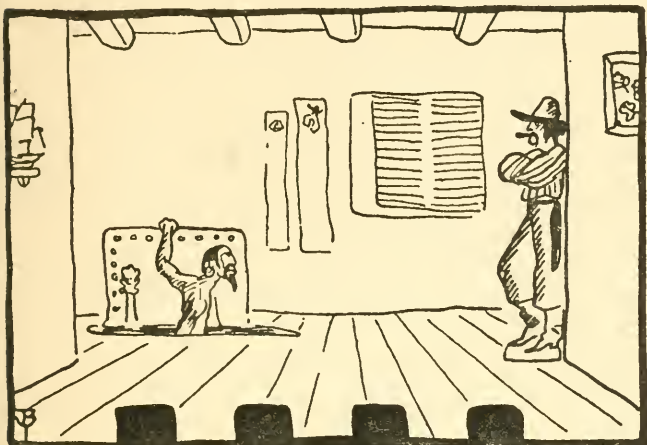
pirates with plenty of glue and footlights about them, but he would always have you remember that he is a serious artist. When making the drawings for these plays he is not serious; he is out for a frolic in relaxation of a rule he has made for himself—that is, to paint only the things he has really seen happen. “A sure-enough pirate,” says Mr. Yeats, “has never yet happened to me.” It is a statement difficult to believe of one who in his drawings and plays has distilled for our delight the essence of buccan-
eering and piracy, given us happy glimpses of blue breakers and palm-clad islands, and taken our breath away with the salt breeze of the Spanish Main.

One of Jack B. Yeats's Plays for the Miniature Stage

JAMES FLAUNTY:

OR, THE TERROR OF THE WESTERN SEAS.

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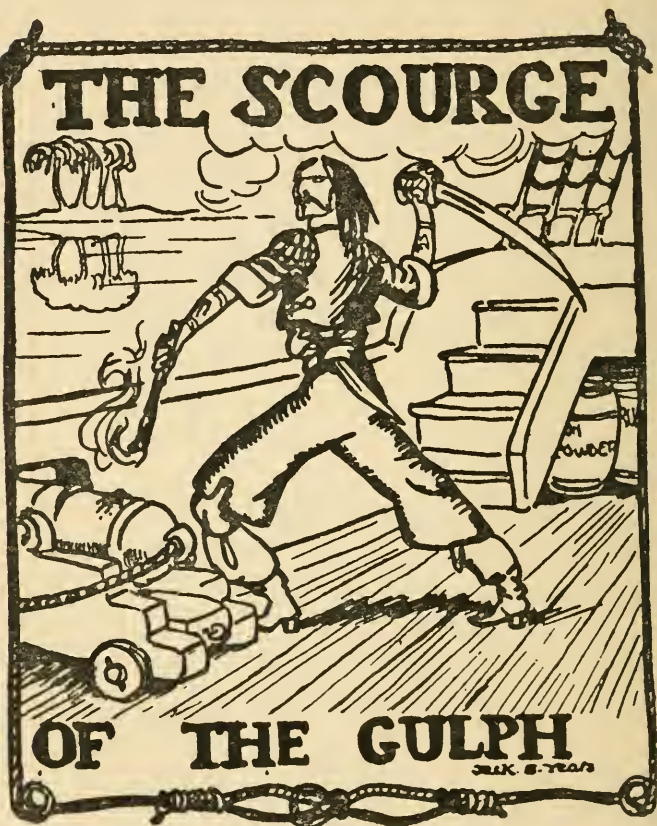
"Debauched by sixpenny and even threepenny editions, some may rail at this as a dear shilling's worth. (For superior copies the charge is a crown.) For all such niggards this lean but precious pamphlet—it is no more—will be caviare. But drat economy, say I, when a paltry subscription will land you straight into the arms of a real toy pirate. Never again will you have so good a chance of seeing one, of hanging on his talk, of sympathising with his peril. Never, I mean, apart from the present showmen, who, however, promise yet better things. Stevenson, you mark, had two sources of enjoyment—play and puppet-show—and Mr. Mathews announces his intention of producing the plays, with scenes and characters, on sheets, to be cut out and played on miniature stages. What *will* the next generation be like? Certes, 'tis a bold experiment, and, to say the worst, a queer revival."—*Speaker*, 1/2/02. F. J. S.

"At a time when the palmy days of the drama are a melancholy remembrance, we welcome the publication of *James Flaunty: or, The Terror of the Western Seas*, by Jack B. Yeats (Elkin Mathews), which, in its awakening of romance, may be dimly associated with the Celtic revival. The spirit of the publication may be indicated by a quotation on the cover from Stevenson's 'A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured.' It is announced that copies of the play coloured by the author may be had for five shillings, but it is difficult to believe that colour can add materially to the excellence of these designs. Still, a judicious use of crimson lake ('Hark to the sound of it,' reader, as Stevenson says) might add something to the glories of Captain Gig and the rest. We may particularly commend the reticence of effect in the pictures, which aim at no vulgarity of facetiousness, and there is an exquisite moderation in the dialogue. 'It is intended later to produce the plays with scenes and characters on sheets, to be cut out and placed on miniature stages.' We should like to be there to see."

Manchester Guardian, 10/12/01.

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"So many in these days are for reviving the romantic drama, for bringing to life—

The mellow glory of the Attic stage,

and for restoring the arts of acting and of speaking verse, that we have come to regard the exposition of a new theory without emotion; the advent of a new play without excitement. Our romantic dramatists take themselves too seriously, and aim at expressing rather the sorrows than the joys of life. Since the world has heard the beauty of the muted string it has forgotten that life ever went merrily to a pipe, or to the Arcadian, but penny, whistle. It has forgotten the song, and the old tune, and the story. It has forgotten that the drama ever shook men's hearts, and has come to prefer that it should help to digest men's dinners. We want—

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But in Mr. Jack B. Yeats we recognise the makings of a dramatist of an older order; a writer of plays that are written in the intimate speech of the folk-ballad. While his contemporaries argue, wrangle and disagree, as to what is music, and what is the best music, and what music saves a man's soul, he, like the hero Finn, is content with the best of all music—

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His play of *The Treasure of the Garden* carries on a tradition that shook the stage before playwrights became self-conscious and before poets aimed to please the high foreheads in the stalls. There is no mental dyspepsia in his characters. They present no problem. Their aim is to be real. To be glad and sorry for a little while on a miniature stage measuring a foot across."—*Academy*, 14/3/03.

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